

In the Claims

1-36. (cancelled)

37. (currently amended) A ~~couple for coupling~~ a pair of instrument organizers comprising a couple for coupling the pair of instrument organizers, each of the pair of instrument organizers comprising:

an elongated base structure having a top surface, a front surface and a rear surface, the front surface and the rear surface each extending from the top surface, and the front surface and the rear surface each disposed on opposing sides of the base structure, the elongated base structure comprising a width measured from the front surface to the rear surface and the elongated base structure including opposed terminal ends;

at least one upstanding post fixedly positioned at one of the terminal ends of the base structure; and

at least one movable stabilizing structure comprising a body portion and self-gripping means extending away from the body portion and having at least a portion of which engage the front and rear surfaces of the base structure for stabilizing and supporting at least one surgical instrument in a generally upright state at least partially on the organizer and the self-gripping means having a length that is not greater than a height of the base structure;

and the couple comprising a coupling device for connecting the pair of instrument organizers together.

38. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 37 wherein the elongated base structure of each instrument organizer is dimensioned and configured to support only one end of the at least one surgical instrument, the elon-

gated base structure of each instrument organizer also being dimensioned and configured to be mounted on a planar support surface which supports another end of the at least one surgical instrument.

39. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 37 wherein:

the body portion of each instrument organizer includes an upwardly extending post comprising a first side surface and a second side surface that each define a plane that extends in a direction that is generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the elongated base structure when the movable stabilizing structure is mounted to the elongated base structure;

the self-gripping means of each instrument organizer having a pair of self-gripping legs that each include a first side surface and a second side surface each of which defines a plane that also extends in the direction that is generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the elongated base structure when the movable stabilizing structure is mounted to the elongated base structure; and

for each instrument organizer, the plane defined by the first side surface of the upwardly extending post for each instrument organizer and the planes defined by the first side surfaces of the self-gripping legs are generally coplanar and the plane defined by the second side surface of the upwardly extending post and the planes defined by the second side surfaces of the self-gripping legs are generally coplanar.

40. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 37 wherein the elongated base structure and the movable stabilizing structure of each instrument organizer comprises a lint-free foam plastic.

41. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers couple of claim 37 wherein the coupling device comprises a lint-free foam plastic.

42. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers couple of claim 37 wherein the coupling device comprises a wall portion defining an aperture that is dimensioned and configured to receive adjoining upstanding posts of said instrument organizers when the at least one of the upstanding posts are disposed in juxtaposition.

43. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers couple of claim 37 wherein the coupling device comprises a collar including a wall portion having a generally rectangular outer configuration in cross section and defining an aperture having a generally rectangular configuration for receiving the at least one upstanding post of each of the pair of instrument organizers and wherein each of the at least one upstanding posts has a cubical outer configuration.

44. (currently amended) A ~~couple for coupling a pair of instrument organizers for at least partially supporting surgical instruments,~~ comprising a couple for coupling the pair of instrument organizers, each of the pair of instrument organizers comprising:

an elongated base having a substantially uniform width and defining a continuous surface extending from a first side surface to an opposing second side surface thereof, the elongated base including two terminal ends;

at least one fixed end post extending from one of said terminal ends of the base;
and

at least one movable stabilizing structure including a central body having two self-gripping legs extending generally parallel to each other, the self-gripping legs having opposing, inwardly facing surfaces spaced apart a distance substantially equal to the width of the base of the instrument organizer, the opposing, inwardly facing sur-

faces of the two self-gripping legs being dimensioned and configured to solely grip the first and second side surfaces of the base of the instrument organizer, respectively, so that the movable stabilizing structure is attachable to the base of the instrument organizer and the central body is held in place by the self-gripping legs for retaining the surgical instruments in an organized and upright state partially on the organizer, and the couple comprising a coupling device for connecting the pair of instrument organizers together, wherein,

the central body of the movable stabilizing structure includes an upwardly extending post comprising a first side surface and a second side surface that each define a plane that extends in a direction that is generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the elongated base when the movable stabilizing structure is mounted to the elongated base;

each self-gripping leg of the movable stabilizing structure including a first side surface and a second side surface each of which defines a plane that also extends in the direction that is generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the elongated base when the movable stabilizing structure is mounted to the elongated base; and

the plane defined by the first side surface of the upwardly extending post and the planes defined by the first side surfaces of the self-gripping legs are generally coplanar and the plane defined by the second side surface of the upwardly extending post and the planes defined by the second side surfaces of the self-gripping legs are generally coplanar.

45. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers couple of claim 44 wherein the coupling device comprises a wall portion defining an aperture that is dimensioned and configured to receive said end posts when the end posts are disposed in juxtaposition.

46. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 44 wherein the coupling device comprises a collar including a wall portion having a generally rectangular outer configuration in cross section and defining an aperture having a generally rectangular configuration for receiving said end posts and wherein each end post has a cubical outer configuration.

47. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 44 wherein the elongated base and the movable stabilizing structure of each instrument organizer comprises a lint-free foam plastic.

48. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 44 wherein the coupling device comprises a lint-free foam plastic.

49. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 44 wherein for each organizer, a height of the elongated base is greater than a length of each of the self-gripping legs such that a bottom surface of the central body will grip the continuous surface of the elongated base.

50. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 44 wherein for each organizer, a height of the elongated base is approximately equal to a length of each of the self-gripping legs such that a bottom surface of the central body will grip the continuous surface of the elongated base.

51. (currently amended) The pair of instrument organizers ~~couple~~ of claim 44 further comprising a double sided self adhesive strip attached to a bottom surface of the elongated base of each of the instrument organizers.

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Amendment

52. (cancelled)

53. (cancelled)